**History of "The Pretzel"  
Old World in Huntington Beach**

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| Pretzel Monk |  | "The Pretzel," monks invented the pretzel sometime between the fifth and seventh centuries. Idling with leftover strips of dough, the monk-baker supposedly twisted and turned them until they resembled a person's arms crossed in prayer, traditional posture for prayer in those days.  The brother monks approved the tidbits, and began using them as rewards for the children under their tutelage. The monks used the inter-connected sections of the "pretzel" to help the children understand the Christian Trinity of "Father, Son and Holy Ghost."  Their success with the re-shaped crusts spread to monasteries far and wide, and soon the pretzel became an important symbol in church life, thought to bring good fortune, prosperity and spiritual wholeness to those who ate them. |
| Pretzel |
| Pretzel |

It wasn't long before pretzels were introduced into the wedding ceremony: the couple wished upon and broke a pretzel like a wishbone, then ate it to signify their oneness.

During the 1500's, the city of Vienna was under siege by Ottoman Turks. Prevented in their efforts to break through the city's walled fortifications, the Turks began tunneling below ground. Pretzel bakers, working through the night, heard the strange noises in the cellars, and notified the guard. The city was saved, and the grateful emperor awarded the pretzel bakers an honorary coat of arms!

The first American pretzel bakery started when a kindly baker gave a drifter a free meal in the 1850's. In turn, the drifter gave the baker a recipe for European pretzels, and soon became employed as the baker's apprentice. As they whipped up batches of a new style of pretzel, they won the honor of baking and selling the first hard and crusty version of the Pennsylvania Dutch hard pretzel. German children had other connections to the pretzel, too. They tied pretzels on a string around their necks at the beginning of a new year for prosperity, health and good fortune.

Largest pretzel ever baked: 40 Ibs, 5-feet across.

***by Joe Nacchio of Philadelphia***